Language biographies – approaches to multilingualism in education and linguistic research

Brigitta Busch

Introduction – the scope of this publication

The idea for this publication emerged during the Training of Trainers in Southern Africa programme for Educators in Multilingual Education (ToTSA), offered annually by Project for the Study of Alternative Education (PRAESA) at the University of Cape Town between 2002 and 2005. During these pan-African courses participants from diverse backgrounds came together from countries with very different orientations in language policies and approaches to education, such as Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Malawi, Madagascar, Namibia, Swaziland and South Africa, and from different language backgrounds and professional and academic orientations. The heterogeneous nature of the group was a great challenge and at the same time a valuable resource. That is why we decided to work with a biographical approach, amongst others. It consisted in establishing personal language portrayals, writing and discussing personal experiences with literacy, school and language learning and in working on language biographies. Several students chose to write longer or full language autobiographies enhanced by interviews with interlocutors from within their own communication network.

This publication aims at contributing to a growing corpus of academic literature that foregrounds the learner perspective in literacy and language learning and emphasizes emotional dispositions and real and imagined belongings to communities of practice Being aware that the significance of personal stories of language learning is only beginning to emerge in applied linguistics research and that 'first-person accounts on language learning have always been received with suspicion, deemed incomplete, biased, unreliable or naïve' (Kinginger 2004:220), we would like to make our experiences with a biographical approach available also to teachers and teacher trainers who work in contexts of great linguistic diversity, in order to show that these approaches are deserving of more serious attention. Our experiences draw on studies of multilingualism and linguistic diversity which are based on working with life course narratives[1] and on biographic approaches employed in adult education and teacher training courses that raise participants' awareness of their own resources and potential[2].

---

1 Franceschini (2001) gives an overview on the theoretical and methodological scope of some of these studies.
2 For an overview see e.g. Kearny 2003.

This first chapter provides an introduction to biographic approaches in linguistic and education research as well as in teacher training and adult education. Chapters two and three are (auto-) biographic texts written by Aziza Jardine and Angelika Tjoutuku, who participated in one of the ToTSA courses. These texts are topical life documents (Plummer 2001), not in the sense that they aim at grasping the fullness of the authors' lives, but in confronting the authors' experiences of language learning, language acquisition and of linguistic practices understood as social practices.

Aziza Jardine's text takes as its starting point the Kaaps-speaking environment of District Six in Cape Town and retraces the ambivalences attached to her first language which she experienced at different times: Afrikaans as the language of the ruling class, the language of oppression, Kaaps as a low prestige variety of Afrikaans, considered a 'lingo' not even a dialect, and finally Kaaps re-appropriated as a means of expressing identity and as a point of departure for acquiring other languages. In its multilayeredness Aziza Jardine's account is more than a linear life story narrative. Interweaving her own language biography with interviews collected among family members, friends and colleagues, she offers the reader the possibility of grasping the major lines and nodes of her communication networks and the language attitudes of her principal communication partners. Aziza Jardine's text concludes with language-related excerpts of her personal diary, written while she was working on her language biography. This meta-narrative – an appendix to her main text – shows how the process of writing her language biography helped her to rediscover and valorize her own linguistic resources, to enhance her language awareness and to develop metalinguistic skills useful for her professional work as a teacher as well as for her personal development towards multilingualism.

Angelika Tjoutuku's text focuses on her first experiences with language learning, literacy and print in the family and peer group environment as well as on her exploits with reading, writing and language learning in subsequent school years. Her account reveals insights on forms of literacy promoted by local communities and on formal schooling in Namibia in the 1960s and 1970s. The biographic approach allows her to take a different perspective from that of the detached analyst or historian: her narrative draws attention to questions of language attitudes, of the link between language and identity. She compares her experiences with the language biographies she collected among family members and friends. She expresses clearly her concern about the 'colonial language fever' that 'befell' her and many others in her generation. From the perspective of her present position at the National Institute for Educational Development in Okahandja (Ministry of Education, Namibia) she suggests different ways for making use of the biographic approach for promoting literacy in African languages.

Monolingualism – multilingualism – heteroglossia

The African Union has proclaimed 2006 as the Year of African Languages and has entrusted the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) with its implementation. UNESCO is proposing to declare 2008 the international year of linguistic diversity, and the European Union has extended the portfolio of the commissioner for education to the field of linguistic diversity. These randomly enumerated public events testify to the increasing awareness of the multilingual nature of societies in Africa and in other parts of the world. More attention is being paid to designing language policies that take this multilingual nature of present societies into account in different domains.

Research dedicated to social and individual bi- and multilingualism and in language policies has gone through different phases which are linked to varying concepts of social organisation, identity and ethnicity. Until the 1970s bi- and multilingualism was treated as a marginal topic and considered mostly as the exception to the norm of growing up and living in a monolingual environment. Speakers of other languages than the dominant one were seen mainly as deviant and deficient, and so-called balanced bilingualism – the mastering of two languages to a comparable level of proficiency – as a perhaps desirable but nevertheless unattainable ideal. Social progress was linked to the adaptation of language practices to the ruling norm, to individual linguistic assimilation if one happened to be 'different'. On the social level the multilingual nature of societies was seen as a potential threat to national unity rather than as a resource for cross-border cooperation or international exchange, as in the case of the Basque country during the Franco regime or of the predominantly Kurdish speaking parts of Turkey to this day. In some African countries huge efforts were made to promote African languages as national languages with a view to nation building and development (as for example in Tanzania, Madagascar, Somalia). Paradoxically, within the monolingual paradigm language policies also often enough promoted linguistic division in the sense that differences between local varieties of dominated languages were overemphasized rather than the commonalities stressed, in the interests of segregation, exclusion and the maintenance of political power. Such a policy contributed to stabilizing linguistic hierarchies in the sense that one language dominated in virtually all public domains, and only territorially and socially limited spaces were allowed for the use of all others.

In the late 1970s linguistic research became more interested in the social dimension of language, and phenomena linked to multilingualism and language contact attracted larger interest. Language policies began to acknowledge linguistic plurality as well as the importance of having access

to education and information in the first language or mother tongue. The valorization of the so-called lesser used languages, of languages with lower social prestige and the recognition of linguistic rights were certainly an achievement within the framework of this approach. Nevertheless, concepts based on the assumption of languages as bounded units and on cultural identity linked to a particular language continue to take a monolingual paradigm for granted and fail to grasp the social heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1981), i.e. the multilinguality, the multivoicedness and the multidiscursivity of our societies.

In the current debate around linguistic practices within the paradigm of globalization some of the very core concepts in sociolinguistics are being questioned. The monolingual habitus (historical disposition) of the multi-lingual school is being challenged as a feature that excludes access to education for speakers of lesser-used or non-dominant languages (Gogolin 1995). Multilingualism, more specifically multilingual practices are seen as situated practices rather than as abstract and absolute competences a speaker acquires. The idea of a perfect mastering of two or more languages is dismissed in favour of concepts that acknowledge that multilingual competencies are organised around activities, situations and topics (Blommaert 2005). Similarly, practices such as language crossing (Rampton 1995), i.e. the appropriation of elements of other voices across language boundaries, that are not based on the knowledge of a language in a traditional sense but rather on language as an expression of style, are being increasingly perceived as multilingual practices and not as deficien-cies, as hitherto. Language ethnography and the de-construction of lan-guage ideologies demystify the notion of language as a bounded and countable unit (Gal 2006) and allow deeper insights into the relationship between language and constructions of identity. The awareness of diversity not only as a multitude of separate and bounded languages communities but also within a community, a network of communication or within a given situation builds on the concept of heteroglossia developed by the Bakhtin circle (1934/1981). Aziza Jardine's narrative captures some ele-ments of the heteroglossia that characterizes the linguistic situation in the Western Cape. In tracing the ambivalences that accompanied her own change in attitude towards her first language, towards Afrikaans/Kaaps, and in documenting the stances of different persons within her communication network towards the 'language' and the 'lingo', she shows that no single social group can today legitimately claim ownership of a language and the power to determine fixed 'boundaries' around the language, or define who is or is not a 'legitimate' speaker of the language. Aziza's text shows that language is contested and that language practices are situated and negoti-ated practices.

It is interesting to note that in linguistic research early works on bilingualism followed a biographic approach and yielded results that diverged from the monolingual paradigm prevalent at the time. Jules Ronjat's (1913) and Werner Leopold's (1939–1949) famous diaries document the language development of their respective children. Ronjat was the first to document the language acquisition of a child with whom the one-person-one-language method was practised. His son Louis grew up in a French-German bilingual situation in which his father spoke exclusively French to him whereas his mother spoke only German. Ronjat's work was ground-breaking as he could show that growing up bilingually had not retarded or hindered his son's linguistic development in any way. Leopold's diaries – also considered a milestone in psycholinguistic research – document his daughter's simultaneous acquisi-tion of English and German. Both works highlight different phases in language development, when children tended more towards one or the other language or when some 'mixing' occurred. A series of language acquisition diaries with different language pairs or even more than two languages followed (Maneeva 2004). And both works stand in opposition to the then ruling opinion that bringing up a child bilingually could be harmful.

In several domains of linguistic research, for example in the field of language policy and language planning, the problem of the disparity between the macro-sociological approach based on large-scale surveys and the micro-level of the individual speaker has been addressed. There is an uneasiness about capturing the language attitudes, the plans and aspirations of speakers concerning language learning and connections between lan-guage and identity (Calvet 2002). Biographic approaches can mediate between the macro level of sociolinguistics interested in the roles and functions of languages in a larger social context and the micro level of the individual angle, the psycholinguistic approach. The biographic account can offer insights into how an individual experiences the broader social context and the language regimes in which she develops her language practices, her ambitions and desires in terms of imagining herself as a speaker of a certain language or code. In this sense biographic approaches can occupy a meso level between the macro level of sociological analysis and the micro level of a particular case study. Although the biographic approach relies on indi-vidual case studies, it is not primarily interested in the uniqueness of a particular life story but rather in the social dimensions of language practices that it helps to reveal. The value ascribed to a particular language practice cannot be understood apart from the person who employs it and from the larger networks and social relationships in which this person is engaged (Bourdieu 1982).

'Gold ... the language of my heart ...' – what language portrayals tell us

The first step towards Angelika Tjoutuku's text was taken during a session of the pan-African ToTSA course in 2002. Students were asked to think about the codes, languages, the means of expression and communication that played a role in their lives and to map them in a body shape drawing according to the importance they attached to them. In the beginning some of the group members were a bit reluctant as drawing did not seem a 'serious' way of reflecting about language practices. Eventually everybody joined in and enjoyed the activity which gave rise to a very lively debate on language acquisition and language learning. From the 20 portrayals we learnt that more than 50 codes/languages were present in the group and that in about a quarter of them such varieties and codes figured as emotionally important means of expression that were not standardised or officially recognised as languages in education.

> 'Yellow, i.e. gold, is Otijherero, my precious language, the language of my heart. Red is Afrikaans, my second best language, the one that was imposed on me. English is green, it is my third best language, the language that opens many doors to me – my key to greener pastures. Yellow and green are for my stomach, for knowledge and for communication. Purple stands for Oshivambo and brown for other African languages, blue is for German. These three colours refer to languages which I use in communication here and there.'

This is how Angelika Tjoutuku described her language portrayal when she presented it to the group during the workshop. Her drawing (see back cover) and the explanation she provided reveal different aspects of how she lives her multilingualism and how changing language policies in Namibia have affected her own linguistic practices.

Language portrayals, drawings to visualise individual linguistic resources, came into use in the beginning of the 1990s when school classes in European cities had become largely multilingual due to migration and labour required mobility which brought children from very different countries and language backgrounds together into a common learning environment. For children colouring in preprinted body silhouettes with different colours is an activity they know well from painting books. They usually enjoy choosing a colour to symbolize a particular language or code they speak and take their time to find the appropriate way to represent their linguistic capital. Drawing language portrayals as a group activity provides an occasion for metalinguistic considerations and makes different forms of multilingualism lived within the group visible (Krumm 2001). For adults in a situation of further education and training the change from the written mode to the visual mode, from representing ideas and concepts not

through words but through design, is rather unusual. It was actually in the heterogeneous multinational and multilingual group of the first pan-African ToTSA course that I ventured for the first time to propose to an adult audience the drawing of language portrayals as an introductory activity to a workshop on teaching methods for multilingual classrooms. Since 2002 I have seen the drawings of several hundred portrayals in different courses and language environments in different parts of the world.

The pictures that result from the drawings are very different but so far none of the drawings have been monochrome, i.e. showing a situation of monolingualism; even pictures in which only two colours figure are the exception rather than the rule. People define for themselves which languages, codes, registers and so forth, deserve a colour of their own. Often different varieties related to one standard language figure in different colours, for instance English for lingua franca communication and English for leisure time activities like music, movies, and so on. First languages, languages/ codes with high emotional value and such that are important to the author of the portrayal often figure in bright colours (e.g. red, yellow). Languages once learnt or acquired that only play a marginal role at the time of the drawing tend to be depicted in pale shades. Languages or codes loaded with negative connotations are frequently represented in the 'non-colour' grey. Although there is no neutral and universal meaning that can be attached to a particular colour, colour becomes a signifier, a bearer of meaning, in a particular situation and in association with the meaning potential it has acquired because of its cultural history (Kress, van Leeuwen 2001:59). How the different colours are arranged and brought into relation with different body parts is again very variable. Both the colour and the location of a particular field within the drawing reveal their meaning only when the drawing is explained and interpreted by the author.

To change the mode of representation, to express thoughts and feelings about one's own linguistic resources and language practices not verbally but visually helps to shift the focus of attention. Whereas the logic of speaking and writing is determined by time and linear sequencing, space and simultaneity characterize the image (Kress 2004:152). The image draws attention to the way in which the different components of the picture relate to each other, it is a kind of snap-shot of a particular moment in time. In the case of the language portrayals it foregrounds the state of the personal language profile that is actually present rather than emphasising the path which has led to it.

Language practices are regularised by strict and normative rules. Through language use the social status, affiliation with a professional group, affinity with a certain world view, and the ties to certain geographic and linguistic environments can be expressed. The processes that determine language use run to a large extent in an automatized way and escape

conscious control. Therefore it is difficult to analyse and discuss personal language use in a reflective manner. It is the change of the representational mode with its particularities that makes language portrayals an interesting point of departure for thinking and discussing about language in use. Language attitudes, the importance of a particular dialect, code, lingo or register, aspirations in language learning, fantasies and projections in imagining oneself as a speaker of a language/code can surface and become easier to grasp.

Memory work on autobiographic essays

There is an increasing number of accounts on the use of biographic approaches in teacher training and in training for academic writing (e.g. Ball 2003, Mendelowitz 2005 describe activities in the South African context). Ball (2003:200) argues that the narrative autobiographical essays teachers wrote during training courses in the US and in South Africa about their own literacy experiences contributed 'to bring to a metacognitive level of awareness those experiences that helped to influence their own literacy attitudes and their preconceived notions of what it meant to be a teacher'. Mendelowitz (2005) shows how memoir writing in a course for pre-service teachers served as an introduction to writing and understanding the nature of narratives. In this concept memoir writing is seen as a group activity and is not conceived as solitary product-oriented but rather as a process which encourages identity work and stimulates students to take up new subject positions.

Feminist studies in particular have sought to promote a methodological and theoretical framework that allows the development of emancipatory approaches based on autobiographical texts and on collective work on such texts, so as to make power relations and gender roles apparent and to develop alternative modes of action. Frigga Haug's (1999:199 ff) concept of memory work refers to instances where the roles of the researcher and the subject of the research coincide, and where sociological introspection takes place.. It consists of short biographical texts which describe a particular situation in detail. The writing is followed by a close reading of the texts produced in the group, and by a group discussion in which these texts are analysed. Memory work is work close to the text, it is based on text and discourse analytical approaches. It prepares the persons involved to consider new and different perspectives, attitudes and visions for the development of a personal voice and opens a way for the transformation of practices and the implementation of emancipatory strategies.

It was an activity based on the concept of collective memory work that inspired the next step towards Angelika Tjoutuku's text. After having drawn the language portrayals, students in the 2002 pan-African ToTSA

course were asked to write short texts about their first encounters with literacy. They were asked to concentrate on a particular scene they remembered well, rather than on telling a story consisting of a chain of different events. Chains of events that are regrouped to form a story are difficult to work upon because such chains often serve the purpose of constructing the author in a particular role and can have a self-justifying character. Students were also asked to describe the event they had chosen in such a way that it was possible for others to comprehend it more fully. Sensory impressions like smell, taste, sounds, and colours can help the author to deepen memories. Feelings and subjective impressions are important pieces of information in this context and should play a role in the text, whereas analytical interpretations should be left to the group.

Many of the texts written during the 2002 ToTSA course reported first encounters with reading or writing as traumatic events. Stories centred around how family or first language(s) had been disregarded or were even forbidden in the context of the formal school system, how difficult learning was without books and sometimes even without paper or slate boards or how literacy skills they had acquired in the community before entering the formal system were belittled. Angelika Tjoutuku's story focused on a scene when her brother had offered to teach her how to read and write so that she could decipher the messages her sister used to 'encrypt' her notes in order to deny Angelika access to them. Her description of learning as a peer group experience gave rise to a discussion about the relationship between formal and informal education and the importance of first languages in education, as well as about questions of motivation in literacy learning and on dimensions of creativity and play in school.

Writing stories about their own first encounters with written language allowed the students to appreciate first steps in literacy from the learner's perspective, i.e. another perspective than their present as teachers or teacher trainers. The analyses of the texts within the group of students focused on how different positions and attitudes were embodied and expressed by teachers and experienced by the learners as well as on how alternative learning strategies could be developed. The aim of memory work is not to gather information about 'what happened' but rather about which subject positions were taken within the social settings in which language practices are enacted, as well as to ask the question about possible alternative ways of acting in similar situations. The way for a reflection on and a transformation of practices is thus opened up. Memory work is based on the assumption that individual language practices stand in a complex relationship to collective memory and history. It further assumes that in the individual's memory, historic events and processes of social change play a role as subject positions are developed in relation to such events and processes, and that individual language practices are socially shaped and contribute in turn to

shaping them. Ball (2003:200) who used a similar approach of collective autobiographical writing in teacher training courses in South Africa and in the US, summarises:

This autobiographical activity served as a readiness exercise that prepared teachers to consider new and different perspectives, attitudes, and visions for language and literacy, inclusion, and teaching practices in the classrooms.

Writing and telling language biographies

The collective work on the short texts on literacy and language learning, the insights that could be gained from a textual analysis of such texts, and the obvious pleasure in writing vivid and reader-friendly texts that all served to motivate some ToTSA students to present a biographical text as part of their assignment. In their respective texts both Aziza Jardine and Angelika Tjoutuku emphasise that writing their own language autobiography and conducting biographic interviews among family members and friends that are part of their communication networks has helped them to develop a deeper understanding of learning in general, and language learning in particular, and has enabled them to link theories about language and language in education to their practical work as teachers and as teacher trainers.

To understand what a language (auto-)biography can tell us, it is important to analyse the process of narrating an (auto-)biographicy – or elements of it that centre around a particular topic such as language. In telling life stories people organize their biography, and life is depicted as clusters of 'stories'. For the narrator the first task consists in a stringent selection and compression of what should be told; it is to choose what seems relevant from an unlimited store of individual experiences and to find the appropriate (linguistic) means of expression in terms of terms of register, code and style. As all utterances, personal life histories are dialogic in nature (Bakhtin), a relevant 'other' is always co-constitutive in a particular text, i.e. the narrator develops a narrative – written or spoken – always with a (potential) reader/recipient in mind. To take a practical example: a short language biography included in a curriculum vitae for the purpose of a job application will take a different shape than what the same person will tell a friend or a teacher about their experiences of language learning.

Significant others play different roles in the life course narrative: they appear in the narrative as persons who tell the narrator who she or he is or is perceived to be and allow the development of contradictions between ascribed and experienced or aspired identities. Angelika Tjoutuku speaks about her disappointment and her subsequent unhappiness in school when her first teacher made it clear that she refused to consider her a competent reader, even though she had heard her fluently reading a rather complicated text. Aziza Jardine writes about her momentary retreat into silence and speechlessness when she found out that certain persons denied her the status of being a legitimate speaker of English and Afrikaans, the two languages she had been using in personal communication and during her school education. Significant others also appear in the life course narrative as 'generalized' others, as the impersonal 'moral' authority that enforces obedience to the rules of language use. Fragments from other texts are often built into the narratives, for example as text elements from literature, soap operas, films, magazines, other persons' accounts. As any other type of text, autobiographical accounts have an intertextual dimension: they relate to other discourses present in society and position themselves vis-a-vis the dominant discourse.

The interdependence of individual and collective memory has been a broad concern in the social sciences and cultural studies for a longer time. The concept of 'collective memory' was developed by Maurice Halbwachs (1950/1997) who showed that the embeddedness into a social framework is crucial for the constitution and the preservation of individual memory. In terms of this concept, individual memory is part of a collective memory and generally constitutes itself with reference to the actual social conditions and discourses in society. Recent research in neuroscience and cognitive psychology has provided new insights into how memory is constituted and how it functions (Welzer 2005). This research has also confirmed the cultural studies perspective that individual memory is socially constituted. Memory in this understanding is not the depiction of events and experiences 'as they were in reality'; instead, memory is understood as a continuum of change, an ongoing process that filters less relevant perceptions from more relevant ones, stores autobiographically important experiences, deepens, reconfigures, re-evaluates and transforms them according to new experiences and social situations (Welzer 2005:21f). It seems that emotional experiences attached to particular moments play a more important role than is generally assumed. In particular, retrieving and transforming stored memory takes place when memories are being communicated, when they are being talked about. It is the autobiographical memory that integrates different layers of memory responsible for storing lived episodes, semantic knowledge, automatised behaviour, and so on (Welzer 2005:144). The autobiographical memory organises past experiences in a way that corresponds to the narrator's present situation, it makes individual experiences available for communication and links individual experience to a particular historical configuration (ibid.:236).

A further theoretical strand of reflection on autobiographies is situated within literary studies. From this perspective, biographies and autobiographies constitute the life history genre which has developed in close connection with contextually determined concepts of the self and the way the self

is seen in relation to the collective. Philippe Lejeune (1975/1996) postulates that what he has called the autobiographic pact is a defining feature of the autobiographic genre. This pact supposes that the author, the narrator and the main character in the text are identical; that the text refers to something that is true, a truth not in the sense of a claiming the exact depiction of veritable reality, but of authenticity and coherence of the narrated experiences.

The two autobiographical texts published here are first-person accounts. Sometimes it is nevertheless easier for authors to write in the third person, since writing about 'him' or 'her' already implies a greater distance and an observer position. These two texts can be characterized as an autoethnography, as the autobiographical account is in both cases complemented by recent interviews within the immediate memory community, the family and circle of close friends or, to put it differently, within the immediate personal communication network. Both texts are also enhanced by other documents. Angelika Tjoutuku's contains facsimiles of pages from school textbooks which had made a strong impression on her. And Aziza Jardine's text contains topical extracts from her personal diary. The interlacing of text elements from different genres and sources with the autobiographical narrative draws the reader's attention to the intertextual nature of the texts and to their social embeddedness. In their respective conclusions both authors agree that writing language biographies has not only made them more aware of their proper language practices, but that they also see fields of application of the biographical approach in their professional life as educators.

Language biographies are increasingly being used as an introduction to creative writing and as a preparation for language learning. The European Language Portfolio makes use of language biographies on a large scale. It was launched on a pan-European level by the Council of Europe during the European Year of Languages in 2001 as a tool to support the development of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism. The portfolio aims at motivating learners by acknowledging their efforts to extend and diversify their language skills at all levels; and to provide a record of the linguistic and cultural skills they have acquired (to be consulted, for example, when they are moving to a higher learning level or seeking employment at home or abroad). The portfolio contains a language passport which its owner regularly updates. A grid is provided where language competences can be described according to common criteria accepted throughout Europe and which can serve as a complement to customary certificates. The document also contains a detailed language biography describing the owner's experiences in each language. Finally, there is a dossier where examples of personal work can be kept to illustrate one's language competences (CoE website 2006). Without entering into a discussion about the merits and

shortcomings of the European Language Portfolio I would like to stress the fact that a language biography is included as an obligatory part in the Portfolio. This is no doubt a step forward to acknowledging that language learning takes place largely outside formal institutions and that resources acquired in any language are being valorized.

In conclusion, the example of the language portfolio shows that first person accounts of language learning are beginning to be taken seriously, not only in educational settings such as university-based research, teacher training, and schooling, but also outside of these, in the less formal domains of home and community. In our view, the two accounts that follow exemplify this broader approach to multilingual learning.

References

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1981. *The dialogic imagination*. (ed. Michael Holquist). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Ball, Arnetha F. 2003. US and South African teachers' developing perspectives on language and literacy: changing domestic and international roles of linguistic gate keeping. In Sinfree Makoni; Geneva Smitherman; Arnetha F. Ball; Arthur K. Spears (eds.) *Black linguistics. Language, society, and politics in Africa and the Americas.* London, New York: Routledge, 186–215.

Blommaert, Jan. 2005. *Discourse: a critical introduction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1982. *Ce que parler veut dire. L'économie des échanges linguistiques.* Paris: Fayard.

Busch, Brigitta. 2006. Changing Media Spaces: The Transformative Power of

Calvet, Louis-Jean. 2002. *Le marché aux langues. Les effets linguistiques de la mondialisation.* Paris: Plon.

CoE website. 2006. Council of Europe Website on the European Language Portfolio. http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio/inc.asp?L=E&M=$t/208-1-1/main_pages/welcome.html; download April 2005.

Franceschini, Rita. 2001. Sprachbiographien randständiger Sprecher. In Rita Franceschini (ed.) *Biographie und Interkulturalität: Diskurs und Lebenspraxis.* Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 111–25.

Franceschini, Rita. 2003, September. Unfocussed Language Acquisition? The Presentation of Linguistic Situations in Biographical Narration [62 paragraphs]. Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research [On-line Journal], 4(3), Art. 19. Available at: http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/3-03/3-03franceschini-e.htm [Date of Access: 01/21/2005].

Gal, Susan. 2006. Migration, Minorities and Multilingualism: Language Ideologies in Europe. In: Clare Mar-Molinero; Patrick Stevenson *Language Ideologies, Policies and Practices: Language and the Future of Europe.* Basingstoke: Palgrave, 13–28.

Gogolin, Ingrid. 1994. *Der monolinguale Habitus der multilingualen Schule.* Münster: Waxmann.

Haug, Frigga. 1999. *Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Erinnerungsarbeit*. Berlin, Hamburg: Argument Verlag.

Heteroglossic Practices. In: Clare Mar-Molinero; Patrick Stevenson *Language Ideologies, Policies and Practices: Language and the Future of Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 206–20.

Kearney, Chris. 2003. *The Monkey's Mask: identity, memory, narrative and voice*. Stoke on Trent, Sterling: Trentham books.

Kinginger, Celeste. 2004. Alice doesn't live here any more: foreign language learning and identity reconstruction. In: Aneta Pavlenko; Adrian Blackledge (eds.) *Negotiation of Identities in Multilingual Contexts*. Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto, Sydney: Multilingual Matters, 219–43.

Kress, Gunther & Van Leeuwen, Theo. 2001. *Multimodal discourse. The modes and media of contemporary communication*. London: Arnold.

Kress, Gunther. 2004. *Literacy in the new media age*. London: Routledge.

Krumm, Hans-Jürgen; Eva-Maria Jenkins. 2001. *Kinder und ihre Sprachen – lebendige Mehrsprachigkeit: Sprachenportraits* gesammelt und kommentiert von Hans-Jürgen Krumm. Wien: Eviva.

Lejeune, Phillipe. 1975/1996. *Le pacte autobiographique*. Paris: Edition du Seuil.

Leopold, Werner F. 1939–1949, four volumes. *Speech development of a bilingual child. A linguist's record*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Maneva, Blagovesta. 2004. 'Maman, je suis polyglotte!': A Case Study of Multilingual Language Acquisition from 0 to 5 Years. In: *The International Journal of Multilingualism*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 109–21.

Mendelowitz, Belinda. 2005. Representing shifting selves: reflections on teaching memoir writing to pre-service teachers. In: *Perspectives in Education*, Vol. 23 (1), 15–24.

Norton, Bonny. 2001. Non-participation, imagined communities, and the language classroom. In M. Breen, (ed.) *Learner contributions to language learning: New directions in research*. Harlow, England: Pearson Education, 159–71.

Plummer, Ken. 2001. *Documents of Life 2. An invitation to a critical humanism*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage.

Rampton, Ben. 1995. *Crossing: language and ethnicity among adolescents*. London: Longman.

Ronjat, Jules. 1913. *Le développement du langage observé chez un enfant bilingue*. Paris: Champion.

Welzer, Harald. 2005. *Das kommunikative Gedächtnis. Eine Theorie der Erinnerung*. München: C.H. Beck.

Ampe' Proudly Kaaps – A language biography from the Western Cape

Aziza Jardine

I have chosen to describe my language history by including the narratives of people who reflect the language environment I was exposed to, and who influenced my language learning. This is why I refer to it as a language biography rather than a language autobiography (cf. Nekvapil 2003). I also reflected on the process of writing the language biography and how this, together with readings on language attitudes and identity during this period influenced my capacity to observe language practices, and raised my language awareness and understanding.

1. A Western Cape language biography

My parents' languages

My mother, one of nine children, was born and grew up in District Six. The family spoke what I now understand to be Kaaps-Afrikaans and this has remained my mother's home language. As was the custom in her community during the 1940's girls only attended school until they became *jong meisies* (attained puberty). They would then stay at home till they were old enough to go and work in the clothing factories – usually at around 15 or 16. My mother attended school until Std 5 (Gr 7) and does not remember much about her English language learning, but she did learn enough for her to be able to read the newspaper and communicate with the younger generation fairly fluently – although English phone calls still make her nervous.

Her brothers had the option of continuing school if the family could afford this and only the youngest one did. He completed Matric and was offered a bursary to study in England but my grandparents did not think this would be wise. My uncle ended up working for an accounting firm and now owns a second hand bookshop. The other brothers chose my late grandfather's trade of tailor.

Apart from Afrikaans and English, Malay and Arabic also formed part of my mother's life. Arabic especially, is valued highly as it is the language used to perform the daily prayers, it is used at certain ceremonies and for reciting the Koran. In Cape Town most Muslim children went to Muslim school to learn to recite.

---

3 Please note that all translations are in italics – eds.

———— ◆ ————

———— ◆ ————

———— ◆ ————

———— ◆ ————

Language biographies
for multilingual learning

Brigitta Busch

Aziza Jardine

Angelika Tjoutuku

Contents